

Panthers Wage Battle for Survival

PANTHERS, From A1

The official policy of the Nixon administration on the Black Panther Party was enunciated on Thursday by a spokesman for Attorney General John N. Mitchell. The Justice Department, said the carefully worded statement, has "never had any policy of concerted activity with local police in order to harass any members of the Black Panther Party."

Charges that the federal government is masterminding a massive series of arrests and shoot-outs between Black Panthers and police are now a matter of extreme sensitivity to the administration. "We've tried to lean over backwards," said one authoritative government source. "We've even been trying to cool it on grand juries around the country."

The FBI is also maintaining strict silence on charges by Black Panther leaders and their sympathizers that both the department and bureau have been conducting a vendetta against the militant black party that lays

heavy stress on armed self-defense and fiery rhetoric against the authorities.

Backlash of Sympathy

Since the Chicago police raid on Dec. 4 that resulted in the killing of two Panther leaders, Fred Hampton, 21, and Mark Clark, 22, there has been a strong backlash of sympathy in favor of the revolutionary group both in the ghetto and in the civil rights establishment.

Dr. Ralph David Abernathy, chairman of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, called for support of the beleaguered Panther groups. "If we let them suppress the Panthers, then the next group on the list will be your group," he said in Trenton last week.

The National Urban League and American Civil Liberties Union called for investigation of the killings and police attacks.

NAACP director Roy Wilkins, the very symbol of black moderation, said the recent incidents "... take on the aspect of a vendetta by police authorities."

One Panther leader, Education Minister Ronald Hewitt, took a peculiarly exultant view of the current troubles during an interview at Black Panther Party na-

tional headquarters in San Francisco. "It used to take two pigs (police) to harass an unarmed Panther selling the party newspaper," said Hewitt. "Now it takes ten—two to do the harassing and eight to watch the community."

It is not surprising that administration officials are loathe to give what might be considered as the slightest corroboration to the charge that the Panther raids are federal policy.

Despite the bureau's current "no comment" posture, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover gave some explicit indications recently of the federal penetration of the Panther movement.

He told a House Appropriations subcommittee last April 17 that the "revolutionary stand" taken by black nationalist groups "has made it necessary for the FBI to intensify its intelligence operations in this field through the penetration of these groups with informants and sources in order to be kept aware of their plans and objectives."

"This penetration has been made at all levels, including the top echelon of these extremist groups."

Last July the FBI chief

pronounced the Black Panthers as "the greatest threat to the internal security of the country" among all the "violence-producing black extremist groups."

He went on to say:

"Schooled in the Marxist-Leninist ideology and teachings of Chinese Communist leader Mao Tse-tung, its members have perpetrated numerous assaults on police officers and have engaged in violent confrontations with police in cities throughout the country."

Another indication of the temper of emotions within the administration toward the Panthers was a statement, attributed to Civil Rights Division chief Leonard, that "the Black Panthers are nothing but hooligans and we've got to get them."

Jay Miller, director of Illinois Division of American Civil Liberties Union, said in an interview that Leonard made the statement shortly after indictment last March of eight radicals, including Panther leader Bobby Seale, on a charge of conspiring to cause riots last year at Democratic convention in Chicago.

Despite the professed icy of aloofness toward



A cartoon in *The Black Panther*, the group's magazine, characterizes police as pigs and demands that they cease "their wanton murder" and "torture" of Negroes.

Black Panther Party, there is an active legal battle plan, in preparation within the Internal Security Division, for prosecution of Panther groups.

Currently, two lawyers working for Yeagley are researching the possibility of invoking the Smith Act against Panther activists.

"We obviously have some problems in the Smith Act approach," said one government official. "You've got to prove the existence of an organized conspiracy aimed at the forceful overthrow of the government. Then you've got to show there is a clear and present danger that might reasonably be expected to carry out the objective."

"Kill The Pig . . ."

From the standpoint of pure rhetorical violence, the Panthers would seem to have left themselves an easy mark to law enforcement officials.

Dynamite! Black Power! Use the gun. Kill the pig everywhere, appealed former Minister of Education George Murray in a speech at Fresno State College.

"In order to stop the

slaughter of the people we must accelerate the slaughter of the pigs," entreated Eldridge Cleaver, the party's Minister of Information, now reportedly seeking permission to return to the United States from Algeria. "Those who can't stand the sight of blood, especially their own, should stay home."

There is also this excerpt from *The Black Panther*, the movement's magazine, in an article last Nov. 16 on how to make grenades and bombs.

"Now, to make an actual grenade, a weapon that kills the following can be done:

"Take a used, empty aerosol can, pull off the little plastic spray device, and with a hammer and a nail pound the little plastic nipple down into the can . . ." The article describes the manufacture of simple "anti-property and antipersonnel bombs" for the magazine's readers.

One government official commented on all this:

"What can you imagine the reaction of police will be when they are made the target of this rhetoric, as well as of bullets. This is the

first group that has based its appeal on the gun and the slogan, 'Kill The Pig'."

Another highly placed Nixon administration official, who requested that he not be named, expressed a fear that the police forays into the ghetto against Panther headquarters were strengthening the organization.

"Whenever you repress a group through extreme measures you inevitably help to build it up," he said. "The Panthers actually have not been that important. But they are becoming so now."

Though hundreds of Panthers have been arrested and, by one count, 28 leaders have been killed in police shoot-outs, and the demand for bail money has nearly exhausted the party's slim coffers, the indications are that the war will escalate.

There are also indications that in the ghetto—which has never been a political tower of strength to this administration—there is little credibility in the government's claim that it is not part of the national crackdown on Panther chapters.

One of the damaging

blows to the Government's case was a raid by FBI agents last July 4 on Black Panther headquarters in Chicago. Armed only with a fugitive warrant for a Panther wanted in a New Haven, Conn., murder case, teams of agents, wearing bullet-proof vests and white armbands bearing the lettering "U.S. Department of Justice," surrounded the ghetto building with squad cars.

The raid was described by Chicago Daily News reporter L. F. Palmer Jr.:

"... When efforts to coax the Panthers out of their offices failed, the G-men took the sledge-hammer route, rushed the headquarters and took into custody—without resistance—eight Black Panthers, two of them female. By the time the G-men left, revolutionary posters had been torn from the walls, lists of names of Panther lawyers, contributors and other supporters had been confiscated.

"Office equipment and some weapons were carted out and petitions with more than 9,000 signatures seeking an appeal bond for jailed Illinois Panther leader Fred Hampton (killed in this month's shoot-out) had disappeared. Cash—something more than \$1,700—was taken. Food for the Panther's Breakfast for Poor Children's Program had been trampled and slung around the office."

George Sams Jr., the object of the search and the only person named in the warrant, was not to be found.